

CUMMINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 2015

Cummington Council on Aging
P.O. Box 95,
Cummington, MA 01026
413-634-2262
coa@cummington-ma.gov



Carolyn Urekew, Director
Hours:
Wednesday & Friday
9 AM—12 PM

EVENTS — OCTOBER, 2015

Mondays:

Osteoporosis Exercise	9:30-10:30 am
Coffee Hour	10:30-11:30 am
Board of Assessors Assistant	9:30-11:30 am
Town Admin. Assistant	9:00-11:00 am
Needlework Group	1:30-3:30 pm
Bryant Library	6:00-9:00 pm
Veterans' Agent - 1 st & 3 rd Mondays,	9:00-11:00 am

Tuesdays:

Town Admin Assistant	9:00-11:00 am
----------------------	---------------

COA Potluck Luncheon, Oct. 20th, 12 Noon **
at the Community House (3rd Tuesdays)

Board of Health meeting 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:00 pm
Veterans' Agent, 3rd Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00 pm
at the Williamsburg Town Offices

Wednesdays:

COA office hours	9 am-12:00 noon
Chair Yoga with Sarah Prince	12:00-1:00 pm
Tap Dancing***	4:00-4:45 pm
Bryant Library	6:00-9:00 pm
Compactor	5:30-7:30 pm

Thursdays:

COA Board of Directors, Oct. 1st, 9:30 am *

Town Clerk	6:00-7:30 pm
Selectboard	7:00 pm
Board of Assessors meeting	6:00-8:00 pm
2 nd & 4 th Thursdays	
Building Inspector	6:00-8:00 pm

Fridays:

COA office hours	9 am-12:00 noon
-------------------------	------------------------

Saturdays:

Compactor	7:00-11:00 am
Bryant Library	8:30 am-12:30 pm

***Board of Directors will meet on Oct. 1st at 9:30 am. The Board is looking to add new members. If you think you may be interested please call Elliot Ring at 634-5666 or Co-chair Anne Parsons at 634-5707.**

Help prevent Osteoporosis and have fun doing it!

Mondays at 9:30 am. Followed by the weekly **Coffee Hour** at 10:30 pm.



****The October Potluck Luncheon**

will be held on October 20th at Noon here at the Community House. No program is planned so guests are invited to bring friendship, fellowship and laughter! Our potluck luncheons are a fun social event with a lot of good food. Do you need a ride in order to attend?? If so, call Carolyn at 634-2262. Please don't be shy and don't miss out!!

It's that time of year again! If you have a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO or PPO), you should receive a notice from your plan by the end of September. That notice outlines changes to be made to your plan for 2016: *it is important to **review, understand and save** this information!*

During **Medicare Open Enrollment, from October 15th to December 7th**, you will be able to change your plan for next year. If you would like help understanding your upcoming changes and options, a trained SHINE counselor is available to offer **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** counseling on all Medicare and related health insurance programs. Learn more about how SHINE can help *you*: call your local senior center **now!**

*****The tappers are tapping at dance class**
Wednesdays at 4 pm at the Community House!

If you'd like to contribute to the newsletter, contact Carolyn at the number above. Share your memories, a good joke or story, an event you want to highlight!

The Council on Aging would like to extend a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to those in our community who continue to generously donate to help support our programs. We are grateful and appreciate all that you have done and continue to do!

Also a **HUGE THANK YOU** to Nancy Cole who has stepped up and joined the Board of Directors.



The Worthington Health Center will be here on October 20th from 1-3PM to give flu shots to anyone 19 years old and above. Just bring your insurance card and they will take care of the rest.

The Cummington Ladies Lunch Bunch met on September 9th at The Ashfield Lake House. We had a wonderful attendance of 20. The Lunch Bunch also helped celebrate Jane Emerson's birthday.

October 14th the group will travel to Hinsdale to OZZIE'S. We will leave the church at noon. Join us!



Those (waxed fruit) Times

In those days we would visit my aunt in her gloomy apartment. She had a prickly mustache, wore a pince-nez and sprinkled colored cookie crumbs on the meatloaf. FESTIVE! And there, always, on the table, a bowl of dusty waxed fruit - which was as close to fruit as you would get in that apartment.

I shudder when I think of those clammy visits with the awful food, but I remember them so well. And, to my surprise, with great affection.

~ M. Kalman ~



Who would be willing to participate in our Neighbor to Neighbor program? We always need drivers. While the FRTA van use is encouraged, there remains a need for the one on one driver. It could be taking someone to grocery shop or to a Dr.'s appointment. If you would or could be interested, please call Carolyn at 634-2262.

Scams! There is Help!!

I now interrupt our regularly scheduled articles on scams for another article on scams. !! This time I am happy to report that there are a lot of organizations and offices working to prevent us from getting taken. The District Attorney's office sponsored a seminar the other day with speakers from their office, the Consumer Federation of America, US Postal Inspectors, the Greenfield Savings Bank, and AARP.

All speakers had similar messages with a bottom line of "BE ALERT!" If you have any suspicion, even a little sneaking one, ask someone else if they see any problems, e.g., with a solicitation for money. Remember that a real bank, phone company, government office, etc., will not call you and ask for personal information – if they are legitimate, they will already have it. It's OK to hang up the phone on a robo call or the like. If something comes from a foreign address you don't know, report it but don't bite on any offer. They all reminded us that you can't win a lottery without entering it!

The speakers encouraged us to report suspicious items to someone. If an offer comes in the mail, take it to the post office. If it is an email, forward it to your email provider. If someone comes to your door, or worse, says on the phone that "they know where you live" if you don't send them funds, call the police. If you get a cashier's check to deposit, with a promise of free money, take it to the bank and give it to a bank officer. Don't deposit it!

It was great to hear that these offices and folks work together to prevent, catch, and prosecute the cads who try to take advantage of us. So that cashier's check might end up with attention by the bank and their investigators, the police, the postal service, and finally the DA's office. Just like on the crime shows, they need us to give them evidence.

Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member

It's That Time of Year Again!

If you have a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO or PPO), you should receive a notice from your plan by the end of September. That notice outlines changes to be made to your plan for 2016: *it is important to **review, understand and save this information!***

During **Medicare Open Enrollment, from October 15th to December 7th**, you will be able to change your plan for next year. If you would like help understanding your upcoming changes and options, a trained SHINE counselor is available to offer FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling on all Medicare and related health insurance programs. Learn more about how SHINE can help *you*: call your local senior center **now!**

Seniors Aware of Fire Education:

Senior 
SAFE

Senior SAFE addresses not only fire safety problems for older adults, but also other life safety issues.

One of the most common fear older adults face is the fear of falling and getting seriously injured. So, this month's question is: **What is one of the first things I can do to prevent falls?**

Answer: **GET RID OF SCATTER RUGS!**

Because we shuffle even the least bit, being tripped up by a scatter rug easily scatters us to the floor.

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services and some of our local fire departments

Worth Noyes, S.A.F.E. Educator,
Cummington & Williamsburg Fire Departments

Peg's Tidbits

Each month I will share an interesting thought, activity, recipe, or tip. My tip for October comes to you a little late. But I do hope some of you will find it memorable for next summer. Did you know You can enjoy corn without wasting the gas or electric to boil a pot full of water or aggravating arthritic hands?

Many of us have practically given up preparing corn on the cob for ourselves. You can MICROWAVE delicious corn in 5 minutes without husking it first! Do the following.

Leave the husk on the corn. Cut off the bottom of the corn at it's widest point. Use a big butcher knife. Cut off only the part of the tassel that is dark. You should still see some of the light color silk.

For one piece of corn, microwave on high for 4 ½ mins. For two pieces, microwave on high for 5 mins.

Take the corn out when done using pot holders, oven mitt, or garden gloves. Hold the end with the tassel, over the sink, and flip it up and down. It may take a few tries before you get the hang of it.

The goal of flipping the corn is for the cooked corn cob to slowly slip out of the husk. Done correctly the process leaves the silk inside the husk and releasing the cooked corn, silk free! If you try it let me know.

An Early Evening of Oldies and Light Country Music!

The Goshen Womens Club is sponsoring a musical event on **Saturday October 17 in the Goshen Town Hall**. Thanks to a grant from the Cultural Council a group of local musicians will play for a couple hours starting at **6:00**. There will be **light refreshments** available, and there is **no charge** for the event. The band is called **Sidetracked Sunday**, for reasons the players will be happy to explain, and is comprised of folks from Chesterfield and Goshen, with a friend or two from other local towns.

Come out for an early evening of oldies and light country music!

The Home Modification Loan

Program, a state-funded loan program that can help Massachusetts residents live more independently at home. It provides 0% and 3% loans (up to \$30,000) and has generous income guidelines. Approximately 94% of homeowners qualify for a 0% loan. 0% loans have no monthly payments and repayment is only required when the home is sold or transferred! Ramps and Fences, wheelchair and stair lifts, bathroom and kitchen adaptations are included. For info, visit www.mass.gov/mrc/hmlp or contact Susan Gillam at the MA Rehab Commission at 617-204-3739, 1-800-245-6543 (voice/TDD), or email SGillam@CEDAC.org.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR HOME REPAIRS? **The Housing Rehab Program may be able to help!**

Hilltown CDC received funding for the FY15 Housing Rehab Program! We're looking for homeowners who live in Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Peru, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington who need help with their housing repairs. Here's a sample of some the work that can be performed under the Housing Rehab Program:

Roof and Foundation Repairs
Heating System Repairs
Plumbing and Electrical Repairs
Windows and Doors Replaced

Septic Systems and Sewer Tie-in
Handicap Accessibility Work
New Wells Drilled; Pumps Repaired
Lead Paint and Asbestos Removal

These are NO Interest/NO payment loans which may be entirely forgiven, and all repair work is completed by a licensed contractor of your choice. Please don't delay, funding is available and you may be surprised to find out you qualify. Contact Paula Bilodeau, Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123 or email her at paulab@hilltowncdc.org for more information and an application.

The Cummington Council on Aging would like to say THANK YOU to all of you who have generously donated to support our programs!!

If you haven't already, won't you please consider making a contribution? Your help will support our monthly newsletter and our Neighbor to Neighbor transportation program. Many of the folks receiving these services would be isolated without our help. If you would like to make a donation, please fill out the form below and send it with your check made out to the Cummington Council on Aging and write "program support" in the memo line. We thank everyone for their continuing support.

The Cummington Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programs for local seniors!

☐ **I would like to contribute to the COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.**

Name _____

Address _____

Thank you for helping to Support Your Neighbors!
The Cummington Council on Aging

By Request

Living independently and having an active life are common desires among seniors. More and more seniors are interested in aging in place, either remaining in your own home or living elsewhere in your own town. One way to age in place comfortably is to have a sense of security and safety. A threat to safety at home is falling, an increasing concern as we age.

Folks I talked with recently asked me about those emergency buttons you can wear around your house. I started looking into some of the available options for the northern hilltowns. As I investigated medical alert/alarm options I realized choosing which service to use is not the primary decision that is needed.

Before picking an alert/alarm service you need to decide whether you need the service. I found a set of nine questions you can use for yourself or someone you care about to help you think about the need*. Answer the nine questions below by replying YES or NO. Each YES answer is worth the number of points(#) listed at the end of each question.

Is it important to you to continue living independently?
(1)

Would having a medical alarm provide peace of mind for your loved ones, neighbors, or others in your life? (1)

Are you alone for several hours during the day and/or night? (2)

Do you have at least one of these chronic ailments (heart disease, stroke, COPD, osteoporosis, diabetes, arthritis)? (2)

Have you been hospitalized, or been to the emergency room, in the past year? (2)

In the past year, have you fallen, been worried about falling, or otherwise been at risk of falling in your home? (3)

Are you required to take several (more than two) medications each day? (3)

Do you use or have you been directed to use a cane, walker, wheelchair, stair climber or other assistive device to help you with balance and/or walking? (3)

Do you require assistance with at least one of the following activities (bathing, toileting, dressing, meal preparation, or other routine activity)? (3)

Now add the points for only your YES answers. Points appear at the end of each question in parentheses. You will end up with a number between 0 and 20. Look below for the level of need your score matches.

Interpreting your score. Add your YES points. The total indicates your level of need for a medical alert/alarm service.

0 – 3 Limited need: A medical alarm might not be required immediately, but need should be re-evaluated as time goes on or when your situation changes.

4 – 7 Moderate need: Hospitals, doctors, nurses, and professional caregivers might well advise you to consider a medical alarm.

8 – 14 Elevated need: A medical alarm is likely to be recommended strongly by hospitals, doctors, nurses, and professional caregivers.

15 – 20 Urgent need: A medical alarm is likely to be recommended with some urgency by hospitals, doctors, nurses, and professional caregivers.

Falling is a high risk issue for people over 65 because the extent of injury and challenges with healing increase as we grow older. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) reports 1 out of 3 older adults (those 65 or better) fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for older adults. Falls also put seniors at risk for early death or lingering disability. People age 75 and older who fall are four to five times more likely than those age 65 to 74 to be in a long-term care facility for a year or longer.

I urge you to share your score and it's meaning for you with someone in your life, either a professional, family member, friend, neighbor, or Council on Aging.

Now that you have a way to think about your need for an alert/alarm system, the next question is, which one is right for you? Next month I will include information about medical alert/alarm services that serve the hilltowns. I will include question to help you think about choosing a service.

If you have experience with any medical alert/alarm systems please share your thoughts! As always I can be reached at the Chesterfield Senior Center at 400 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA 01012, (517) 285-9242, or pwhalen@hchcweb.org. Be sure to leave a message if I do not answer your call. I try to return calls within 2 days. Check back if you need a faster response.

* Lifeline Systems (2005), 11 Lawrence Street, Framingham, MA 01702-8156. They can be reached by phone at 800-451-0525 or on internet at www.lifelinesystems.com. Use of the above materials is not an endorsement of Lifeline Systems. Choosing a service requires other considerations & information. Look for more on this topic in future newsletters.

Hilltown Elder Network (HEN)

provides eligible seniors with up to two hours of housework/shopping/etc. per week. HEN is run by the Hilltown Community Development Corp (HCDC). If you could use a little help around the house, call Charlie Hayes at 413-296-4536, Ext. 120 (as your coordinator, Jane Neri recovers from her stroke.)

Cummington Council on Aging
P.O. Box 95,
Cummington, MA 01026

Prsrt Std
US Postage
PAID
Permit 183
Greenfield MA

**CUMMINGTON
COUNCIL ON AGING**

Carolyn Urekew,
Director
413 634-2262

Anne Parsons
COA Chairperson
634-5707

Elliot Ring
COA Co-Chairperson
634-5666

Nancy Cole
Newsletter Design
Sherry Loomis

**CUMMINGTON COA NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN FUNDED IN PART BY: GENEROUS DONATIONS,
THE TOWN OF CUMMINGTON, and THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS**

Regional Outreach Report

As the regional outreach coordinator for our seven northern hilltowns I have been busy getting out of the office. June, July, & August were slower paced but still busy enough to keep me occupied. I have been to the Worthington, Goshen, and Chesterfield annual picnics. Plainfield offered its monthly luncheons on the 2nd and 4th Wed of each month. After lunch, we started playing Scrabble -- others have been working on a large puzzle.

In Plainfield, a senior has talked about reading and discussing the recent work by Atul Gawande (2014) Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end. One individual told me if you work with seniors or are a senior reading this short book is a MUST. It concerns the care society provides for seniors. Please email me if you are interested in joining facilitated discussions later in October or early November. Level of interest will determine where & when we meet, so touch-base if you are interested. We are working to arrange for town libraries to get copies of the book so interested library users have access to a copy.

In addition to working with hilltown COAs, I am training to become a stronger resource for seniors. I am participating in the Benefits Counseling and Application Assistance (BCAA) training at the Northampton Senior Center. A large group of volunteers, many newly retired, are learning to assist people apply for a large variety of programs,

discounts, or benefits. Three of the participants, including myself, are planning to offer assistance in the hilltowns. Help will be provided in COA spaces, other public locations, or during home visits.

I recently completed a six-week workshop about Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSM) offered by the Hilltown Community Health Center. It is a no fee, no expenses activity with the possibility of transportation to and from the group meeting place. The six week group is enjoyable, fast moving & educational. Professionals from the Community Programs Office HealthWise Program at the Health Center meet with a small group of individuals. Participants are assisted with better managing a chronic condition and the pain and fatigue that accompany chronic health problems. The groups are intergenerational and participants have a variety of health issues.

If you have or care for someone with a chronic health issue I highly recommend participating in CDSM. Anyone can participate; you do not need to receive any of your health care from the Community Health Center. The September group was the first but more groups will be offered at northern hilltown location(s). If you would like more information you can contact me, Peg Whalen, by mail at Chesterfield Senior Center, 400 Main Road, P.O. Box 7, Chesterfield, MA 01012; by phone at (517) 285-9242; or by email at pwhalen@hchcweb.org. Be sure to leave a message. I work hard to return calls within 1 – 2 days. Please check back if you need a faster response.